

Have you ever picked up your water hose to wash the car or water the flowers yet can't get the water to flow? You know you're connected to the faucet, the water is on, the nozzle is open... what's the problem? Often, it's a "kink" in the hose! The problem is not with the water... or with the pressure. The kink must be found and dealt with for the water to be "worked out" of the hose. Work out the kinks, cooperate with the flow - the "want to" of the water - and it will work. If God is the water (the supply), and His loving will is the pressure... then we are the "hose"! What are some of the "kinks" we must occasionally work out?

One of the kinks could be a "fall from grace". It could be legalism or license for both leave behind the grace of God for a self-centered posture. "I" am the subject in both stances, God is the predicate. Both are expressions of unbelief in the adequacy of Christ. Both look for personal reward - credit or merit in one extreme, pleasure or relief in the other. Both confess "not Christ, but I". What's required to "unkink" the blockage? HUMILITY! (When living means "reward", the life of Christ will no flow.)

Another kink is grumbling and complaining (Phil 2:14). Our complaints are mostly ego spasms - momentary self obsessions with the desire to be the author of our own stories, the director of our own movies. They are confessions of unbelief - that God is not sovereign, not loving, not redemptive - at least not enough to suit my terms! What is necessary to "unkink" such hindrances? WORSHIP! Every crisis, every delay, every change in plans is a call to worship God. (When living means ego sovereignty, we cannot "work out" our salvation.)

One sure fire way to block the flow of Christ's life is to engage in self-interested relations (Phil 2:21). Self-focused living puts a major kink in the hose! When others are meaningful to us only to the degree that they are useful, or only when we enjoy them, we take a position so contrary to the nature of God His life can never be worked out of us. What's required to undo this kink? SELF-EXPENDITURE! (Phil 2:3-4) When we lose the practice of self interest as our basis for reality and think with reference to others, then the Life who is for others freely flows. (When living means "me first", His life cannot flow.)

One final kink - fear. The fear of risk, of the cost of serving others, even the fear of God rejecting us if we fall or fail. To the degree that fear dominates, I will live in a diminished flow of God's fearless life and love. I will try to find my life in the safety of my dreams and fantasies, in the shadows of self-protection, in the abstract and conceptual aspects of my "faith". In other words, in my "comfort zones" (areas bounded on all sides by fear). Fear keeps us self absorbed, trying to save our own lives. We get wrapped up in ourselves and become way too small for the flow of Christ's life to find His way through us. How is this blockage addressed? We get lost in the perfect love of God! (I Jo 4:18) We invite Him to love the fear out of us so His fearless love may be worked out of us. (When living means self-preservation, His life cannot flow.)

In our consent to humility, to worship, to "others first", to His perfect love, we are cooperating with His operation in us. And His life will be worked out of us!

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Autobiography In Five Short Chapters

By Portia Nelson



CALENDAR



Chapter 1

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in
I am lost... I am helpless
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter 2

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I believe I am in the same place,
but, it isn't my fault.
It still takes me a long time to get out.

Chapter 3

I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in... it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter 4

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter 5

I walk down another street.

Enjoy walking down a new street this month.

Steve

MAY	
4,11	CCF
8	1st Bapt High Springs (Pastor's conference)
13	Alachua Study
18-22	Asheville, NC
23-25	Dalton, PA (607-625-4612)
27	Ocala Study
JUNE	
27-29	Bar Harbor, ME

♥ PRAISE and PRAYER ✝

- ♥ What God has already "worked into" us
- ♥ The freedom we have to "work it out"
- ✝ CCF pastor search
- ✝ Conferences and retreats

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